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Education in Shaping a Disciplined and Noble Generation: A Study of Children Aged 4-6 Years at RA Perwanida Brawijaya

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Abstract

This study aims to uncover the implementation of character education for children aged 4-6 years at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, Pamekasan. The method used is a qualitative approach with descriptive data collection, using the principal and teachers of RA Perwanida Brawijaya as primary data sources and literature from books and the internet as secondary data. The research findings indicate that character education at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, Pamekasan, is implemented through routine activities, incidental activities, and the "Blessed Friday Charity" program that assists in the development of empathy, care for others, and understanding the significance of giving in Islam. The limitations of this study lie in implementing character education at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, Pamekasan. The execution of character education can help children face life's challenges and enhance their future quality of life by forming positive attitudes. This character education implementation through routine activities, incidental activities, and school programs allows children to develop good character traits consistent with the values and beliefs instilled in the educational process, becoming an integral part of their personality.

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Introduction

Early education is deliberate assistance provided to children to foster their physical and spiritual growth and development, guiding them toward adulthood. It should begin early since this period is crucial to a child's development. In early childhood, children's potential rapidly grows and unfolds. Moreover, this period represents the first phase of character formation, instilling positive values to mold children into individuals of good character (Harahap, 2021). Within Early Childhood Education, character education can provide positive experiences and shape children into virtuous individuals, equipping them with lifelong benefits (Lathifah & Azizah, 2020). In this context, early childhood character education can nurture positive attitudes, moral values, and social skills that aid in shaping disciplined, empathetic, responsible individuals who can collaborate effectively with others.

The foundation for character and morality is established during childhood (Aziz, 2017). Aisyah (2020), implementing character education as early as possible is beneficial as children can develop all aspects of future development during this time. Character education enables children to adopt good habits in their social interactions, thereby avoiding bad influences (Hardini & Seminar, 2018). This perspective aligns with the views of Tillman & Hsu (2018), who propose that character education aims to foster positive, strong, and integrated character traits within individuals. These traits equip them to lead good lives beneficial to themselves, others, and the environment. Individuals with positive and strong character traits are better prepared to overcome challenges and conflicts.

According to Akbar et al., (2018), character education is inherent in education as it fundamentally focuses on developing good character traits, such as proper conduct towards God, others, the environment, the nation, and oneself. Primasari et al. (2019), highlight the importance of character education in the millennial era. Recognizing the young generation as a valuable asset that will shape and determine the nation's progress, the government believes these individuals must be nurtured and developed following national education goals. Character, reflecting mental qualities, moral strength, and manners derive from values ingrained in the educational process. These elements together form an integral part of a child's personality. (Rohmah, 2018).

Character formation is inseparable from the role of Education (Suwandayani et al., 2016). Schools bear the responsibility of personal character formation. Children are taught to apply life values daily at school, and schools can conduct routine or spontaneous activities to form children's character (Nantara, 2022). However, the reality is that character formation expected within national education has not succeeded optimally, despite implementing character values. Some students still disobey school rules, which impacts the character they possess. The behaviors children display at school will be practiced in everyday life and may lead to violations of school rules such as using harsh words towards peers and teachers, *bullying*, or lying to teachers. These actions can influence their peers and encourage other students to follow the same behavior (Silkyanti, 2019).

Character value instillation can be implemented and made a school culture. Building an influential school culture necessitates the involvement and commitment of all parties involved. Many values must be fostered at school, such as caring, honesty, discipline, creativity, responsibility, health, cleanliness, and compassion for others. Therefore, school character formation is a shared responsibility (Annisa et al., 2020).). One key factor in school character formation is the educator or teacher. Teachers play a vital role in helping develop character values in schools. They are responsible for understanding children's characteristics and assisting children whose character values are not yet mature by providing knowledge beneficial to themselves and society (Priska, 2020). Teachers hold an essential role in forming children's character and personal qualities. As a teacher, guiding children is easy, especially in shaping a disciplined and noble character from an early age.

Discipline is a fundamental requirement for children's character development and formation. Its purpose is to guide children in learning about positive behaviors to prepare for adulthood (Sabartiningsih et al., 2018). Menurut Machfiroh et al. (2019), instilling discipline from an early age is crucial, as it equips individuals with valuable lifelong traits. When children learn discipline from a young age, they become adept at complying with rules that govern groups or community environments, such as schools or broader societal settings.

In addition to fostering discipline, everyone aspires for children to grow into good individuals. According to Hudah (2019), for Muslims, children's education should prepare them for prosperity in this world and instill righteousness for their eternal happiness in the hereafter. This perspective aligns with 's (2017) viewpoint that one of the fundamental attitudes a child should possess to become a virtuous individual is exhibiting good morals and behavior as God's creation, family member, and society member. As the future generation, children need quality education to help their potential flourish. Therefore, Early Childhood Education Institutions must provide appropriate guidance, including discipline and noble character traits.

At RA Perwanida Brawijaya, character formation aimed at nurturing disciplined and noble generations is implemented through customary practices. Based on initial observations, character formation is achieved through simple activities, such as cultivating the habit of greetings, orderly behavior when entering classrooms, waiting turns to recite the Quran, queuing before and after meals, and so forth. Through these customary practices, children learn discipline, appropriate behaviors, proper speech, and how to discern good and bad words in conversation. This approach aligns with Purwanti's (2020) study, which emphasizes the

execution of customary practices and character formation, focusing on instilling positive behaviors in children through teachers' exemplary actions.

Previous research has debated the significance of character education in shaping a disciplined and noble generation. Mahfud et al. (2019) emphasized the relevance and urgency of civic and religious character education from an early age in Indonesia, acknowledging various challenges and opportunities in its implementation. Meanwhile, Yulia et al. (2022) focused on the role of character education and the Montessori method in shaping students' character in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Although both acknowledged the importance of character education, there remains controversy regarding the extent of its effectiveness and how it should be conducted.

However, these studies have not sufficiently explained how education can effectively shape a disciplined and noble generation, especially for children aged 4-6. Both focus on a macro approach and do not elaborate on how the education process can be effectively executed at the micro level, such as in school or family environments. Consequently, there is still a knowledge gap on how education can shape a disciplined and noble generation, particularly in early childhood. The focus of this study is to investigate the importance of character education in forming a disciplined and dignified generation, as well as the role of teachers in shaping children's character in depth for children aged 4-6 years at RA Perwanida Brawijaya Pamekasan. The aim is to fill this knowledge gap and provide insights into how education can be conducted effectively to achieve this objective. The implications of this study are anticipated to provide essential insights into effective character education methods, thereby aiding educators and policymakers in designing strategies that foster a disciplined and noble generation from an early age.

Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach, presenting descriptive data. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena based on the experiences related to the subject being studied (Moleong, 2018). This study aims to investigate the role of education in shaping a disciplined and noble generation among children aged 4-6 years at RA Perwanida Brawijaya Pamekasan. In this research, the researcher acts as the human instrument responsible for defining the research focus, selecting informants as data sources, collecting data, assessing data quality, analyzing data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions from the research findings (Sugiyono, 2015).

This study explores how Education at RA Perwanida Brawijaya Pamekasan contributes to forming a disciplined and noble generation. Therefore, this study examines how early childhood education impacts the development of discipline and nobility among children aged 4-6 years in this institution. The main research question is, "How does the education provided at RA Perwanida Brawijaya Pamekasan shape a disciplined and noble generation, and what observable effects can be noticed in children?"

To ensure rich and meaningful data, this research employs purposive sampling techniques. It involves educators and students aged 4-6 years at RA Perwanida Brawijaya Pamekasan, with the study conducted in a natural setting. This approach means that the researchers observe and document the teaching and learning processes within the natural environment of educators and children to obtain a clear and unbiased understanding of how education shapes a disciplined and noble generation.

The researchers use three data collection methods to ensure comprehensive data. The first method is interviews with educators and children to gather oral information on how education influences the formation of discipline and nobility. The second method is document review, where the researchers examine documents such as textbooks, curriculum materials, and other learning resources used in the classroom. The final method is observation, where the researchers directly witness the teaching and learning processes, observing how the principles of discipline and nobility are applied in education. The researchers analyze the data using an interactive model to understand how early childhood education at RA Perwanida Brawijaya Pamekasan can shape a disciplined and noble generation. The stages of data analysis follow the interactive model by Miles et al. (2014), which includes:

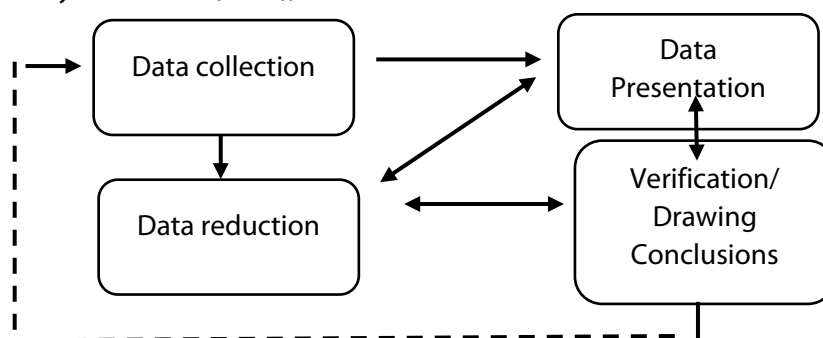


Figure 1. Data Analysis Chart

Result

RA Perwanida Brawijaya is one of the Early Childhood Education institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion in Pamekasan District that implements character education for young children. Based on an interview with HL, the principal of RA Perwanida Brawijaya, character education starts with habitual activities. At its core, habituation encompasses experiences. Therefore, through these regular activities, children will be aided in practicing the positive values needed in daily life.

Character education at RA Perwanida Brawijaya plays a vital role in shaping a disciplined generation, especially among early childhood learners aged 4-6 years. The school employs a method of consistent reinforcement in its implementation, focusing on instilling discipline from simple everyday habits that are believed to shape a child's character. For instance, the children are taught to line up neatly before entering the classroom and maintain that formation until they enter. This practice nurtures discipline while instilling an understanding of respect and value for others.

Discipline is further cultivated through a structured conduct when the children at RA Perwanida Brawijaya aged 4-6 years wait their turn to recite or "mengaji". They are instructed to patiently wait their turn without disrupting the queue, a method that also teaches the importance of respecting other people's rights and being accountable for their actions. Additionally, RA Perwanida Brawijaya emphasizes returning used tools to their original places. Children are encouraged to keep their environment tidy and clean, understanding that every item has its designated place. This promotes a sense of responsibility and respect for their surroundings. Lastly, the school instills proper waste disposal habits, helping children understand the importance of cleanliness and environmental respect.

According to research conducted at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, these routine activities instill discipline in children. The learners become accustomed to orderly conduct in various situations, such as lining up, entering the classroom, waiting for their turn to recite, and queuing when washing hands. These findings suggest that character education through consistent reinforcement can effectively shape discipline in early childhood. Character education plays a crucial role in shaping a generation of individuals with noble morals, particularly at RA Perwanida Brawijaya. According to HL, the school principal, several methods are implemented in their character education activities. First, they teach how to behave towards parents, teachers,

and friends. This respectful and polite attitude is instilled in children through daily activities, thus becoming their habit. Second, children are always instructed to greet when entering and exiting a room. Third, they're taught to express gratitude when someone assists them. Teachers play a significant role in this teaching, demonstrating how to express gratitude as a form of appreciation for someone's assistance.

Fourth, the students are taught to apologize when they make mistakes and understand the importance of apologizing. This moral action instills the value of maintaining harmonious relationships with peers and emphasizes the significance of taking responsibility for one's efforts. Fifth, an activity that holds immense importance in teaching empathy and caring for others is praying for a sick friend. The sixth activity is the act of charity on Fridays, known as the "Friday Blessing." This charitable initiative takes place every Friday after the morning exercise, aiming to teach children about empathy, compassion, and the importance of charity in Islam.

Moreover, the school actively involves parents in this collaborative effort to shape their children's characters. HL, the headmaster of RA Perwanida Brawijaya, highlights the importance of character education for children's future. He asserts that while children may possess extensive knowledge, lacking good character may lead to disrespectful behavior towards peers, a lack of appreciation for others, and even a sense of superiority towards those with lower economic status. Therefore, character education is crucial for children, as their displayed habits and behaviors will positively impact those around them.

Character education can assist children in developing positive attitudes that will help them face life's challenges and improve their quality of life. Based on an interview with HL, the headmaster of RA Perwanida Brawijaya, the goal of character education is for children to learn moral values such as honesty, cooperation, tolerance, courage, discipline, and responsibility. At RA Perwanida Brawijaya, character education is integrated into daily activities to instill Islamic values related to the relationship between humans and God, humans and fellow humans, and humans and the environment.

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping children's moral compass, teaching them about ethical principles, and guiding them to make positive choices. It provides a foundation for personal development and helps them become responsible, respectful, and compassionate individuals. RA Perwanida Brawijaya recognizes the importance of character education in shaping the future generation. They believe that instilling solid values and morals in children equips them with the necessary tools to become honorable and contributing members of society. Through consistent daily practices and integrating Islamic values, RA Perwanida Brawijaya aims to create an environment that fosters character development and supports the growth of disciplined and noble individuals.

In conclusion, character education is vital for children's future as it helps them develop positive attitudes, navigate life's challenges, and enhance their overall quality of life. RA Perwanida Brawijaya prioritizes character education by integrating it into daily activities and emphasizing Islamic values, fostering an environment that nurtures the growth of disciplined and noble individuals. By instilling strong moral values, children can develop into responsible, respectful, and compassionate members of society.

Discussion

Character education is derived from two words, education and character. Education refers to the conscious and planned endeavor of guiding and teaching individuals to grow and develop into morally upright, knowledgeable, independent, creative, and responsible individuals (Devianti et al., 2020). On the other hand, the character represents human behavior values associated with God, oneself, others, the environment, and the nation, manifested in thoughts, feelings, attitudes, words, and actions following religion, laws, culture, manners, and customs (Musawamah, 2021). According to Akbar et al. (2018), character education aims to create a good character, meaning living rightly with God, harmoniously with fellow humans, properly with one's environment, correctly with one's nation, and righteously with oneself.

Character education is essential for early childhood as it is a critical period in forming a child's personality and character. According to Harahap (2021), the primary goal of character education is to nurture and shape a child's traits and behaviors to form a good feeling. When children have good character, they are more likely to act responsibly. Therefore, early childhood character education can be carried out through habitual activities that help children practice the positive values needed in everyday life. Lickona (2016) also emphasizes the importance of character education for children, highlighting the crucial roles of parents and education in shaping children's character through examples, habituation, and systematic teaching. This notion is reinforced by Lathifah & Azizah (2020), who posit that early childhood education should be oriented towards developing character values, making habituation and exemplification crucial in early childhood education institutions.

The formation of character is inseparable from the role of education. Schools are among the institutions responsible for character formation. As the second institution after the family, schools play an essential role in instilling life values in individuals. Children are taught to convey life values that must be realized daily in schools. Schools can carry out routine or spontaneous activities to form children's characters (Nantara, 2022). According to Silkyanti (2019), schools are one of the institutions for instilling character values in students to become better, such as discipline and good moral character, involving all school members to set positive examples for students.

Discipline is a fundamental need for children to form and develop their healthy character. Love without discipline can lead to sentimentality and indifference, while discipline without love can be cruel. Parents and teachers constantly think of appropriate ways to discipline children from early childhood through adolescence (Sabartingsih et al., 2018). Discipline should be practiced through habituation. Discipline instilled from an early age will make it easier for parents when the child deviates in the future. If discipline has been a need from an early age, it can be predicted that they will always be disciplined in adulthood. The habit of discipline will make the child feel accepted in society, inevitably making them happy (Ihsani et al., 2018).

Character values can be realized through habituation and exemplification. Habituation activities are one way to introduce children to think, behave, and act according to religious teachings. In contrast, exemplification is crucial in bringing about life changes and effectively instills moral and social values in children (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017). Character education in shaping disciplined generations at RA Perwanida Brawijaya is carried out through habituation activities, such as children getting accustomed to orderly lining up before entering the class, waiting their turn to recite the Quran, returning used tools to their original place, and throwing garbage in its place. According to SNA, a teacher at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, children tend to mimic the behavior of adults around them. As a teacher, it is essential to set a good example. The teacher must be a good role model for children in behaving in everyday life. Furthermore, developing disciplined character in children requires time and consistency. A teacher must continually offer support and guide the child towards good and right things.

In addition, in forming a noble character, RA Perwanida Brawijaya carries out habituation such as teaching how to behave towards parents, teachers, and friends, apologizing when making mistakes, and expressing gratitude when receiving help. Instilling character education values is paramount in preparing children for the future as individuals with self-identity and guiding them into becoming morally upright humans. According to SNA, a teacher at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, a teacher must be a behavioral model in creating a generation with noble character. The teacher must set a good example in behavior and a noble attitude. Therefore, character education is inseparable from a teacher's role in forming early childhood character.

Teachers have a significant influence on character internalization in schools. A teacher is a role model, and everything they do impacts a child's development. A teacher's example is the best way to positively impact a child's outcome, character formation, and personality in school (Aini & Syamwil, 2020). According to Antara (2019), a teacher's role in developing character consists of three functions: (1) as a role model through repeated words and actions, (2) as a

facilitator, providing the means and infrastructure to facilitate children's play, and (3) as a motivator, giving repeated verbal and nonverbal reinforcement. Conversely, according to Annisa et al. (2020), a teacher's role in character formation is to prepare various decisions and strategies to instill each value, norm, and habit in learning. Teachers can choose specific learning methods, such as delivering quotes of wise words or sayings related to character.

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping ethically upright generations among children aged 4-6 at RA Perwanida Brawijaya. To achieve this, close cooperation between teachers and parents is necessary. Correia et al. (2022) state that early childhood education encompasses all the efforts and treatments undertaken by teachers and parents during the child-rearing and educational process. This highlights the fact that character education is not limited to the school environment alone; it also entails the active involvement of parents in imparting character education to their children.

Teachers at RA Perwanida Brawijaya play a crucial role in creating a learning environment that supports the character development of 4-6-year-old children. They are responsible for creating a pleasant and loving atmosphere in the classroom, where children can glean various experiences and learn through observation, imitation, and direct experimentation. In this regard, teachers must be excellent examples of behavior and attitudes expected from the children so that they can emulate and understand positive values (Taufik, 2020).

However, the role of parents is also vital in early childhood character education. As Hasanah & Deiniatur (2018) mentioned, the family is the smallest social unit with a crucial role in forming a child's character. As primary education agents, parents are responsible for providing character education to their children at home. They should set a good behavioral example, teach moral values, and encourage their children to behave well and possess noble ethics (Hasanah & Deiniatur, 2018).

Therefore, at RA Perwanida Brawijaya, character education for children aged 4-6 years must involve close cooperation between teachers and parents. Teachers should collaborate with parents to create a consistent environment that supports children's character development. Good communication between teachers and parents is also essential to exchange information about a child's character development. In addition, parents need to be actively involved in supporting what is taught at school by providing teaching and good behavioral examples at home (Letswalo, 2023). With good collaboration between teachers and parents, children at RA Perwanida Brawijaya are expected to grow into generations with noble ethics and strong character.

However, character development should not be rushed; it should be performed continuously until they reach adulthood. Relying solely on formal education in schools is not feasible, as schools are institutions that primarily focus on science and technology education, often neglecting ethics and aesthetics. This type of education can be implemented through family education. Therefore, the role of the family is also vital for children's character education (Hasanah & Deiniatur, 2018).

In conclusion, character education in early childhood is of utmost importance in shaping a child's personality and character. The main objective is cultivating good character by instilling values that guide one's behavior towards God, others, the environment, the nation, and oneself. Schools play a vital role through habitual activities and the exemplification of positive values by teachers. Discipline and habituation are critical factors in developing a strong character, while the active involvement of parents is crucial in reinforcing character education at home. Effective collaboration between teachers and parents is essential in creating a consistent environment that supports children's character development. It is worth noting that character development is a continuous process that extends into adulthood, and family education is equally vital as formal education in schools. We can nurture generations with noble ethics and resilient character by fostering a strong partnership between schools and families.

Conclusion

RA Perwanida Brawijaya is an Early Childhood Education Institution that implements character education. It can help children practice positive values in their daily lives through everyday activities. In shaping disciplined generations among 4-6-year-old children, several habitual activities are carried out, such as lining up in an orderly manner, waiting for their turn to recite the Quran, returning used equipment, and disposing of trash in the designated place. Meanwhile, in shaping morally upright generations among 4-6-year-old children, habitual activities are conducted, such as greeting others, expressing gratitude, apologizing, praying for sick friends, and performing blessed Friday practices. The importance of character education lies in cultivating positive attitudes, avoiding disrespectful and demeaning behaviors, and enhancing the quality of children's lives in the future.

The implications for early childhood education, in general, include integrating character education as an integral part of the curriculum and strengthening the collaboration between schools and parents in consistently shaping children's character. The limitations of this research include the focus on a single educational institution and a limited age range. Therefore future research is suggested to involve a broader range of educational institutions and expand the age coverage. Additionally, longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine the long-term impacts of character education on children's development.

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